

Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR, PINS, LE, VT

SUBJ: VATICAN APPEAL FOR ASSISTANCE TO LEBANON

REF: ROME 1796

1. FOLLOWING HIS RETURN TO ROME AFTER A VISIT TO LEBANON WHICH BEGAN FEBRUARY 2 DOMINICAN FATHER HENRI DE RIEDMATTEN, SECRETARY OF THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL "COR UNUM", APPEALED TO THE WORLD THROUGH VATICAN RADIO TO ASSIST THE LEBANESE PEOPLE. ACCORDING TO A REPORT IN THE FEBRUARY 14 VATICAN DAILY /L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO/, FATHER RIEDMATTEN WAS SENT TO LEBANON BY POPE PAUL ACCOMPANIED BY FATHER VERCAEMST OF CARITAS INTERNATIONALIS. THEY MET WITH RELIGIOUS LEADERS AND VISITED VARIOUS SECTIONS OF THE COUNTRY IN ORDER TO ASSESS THE URGENT NEEDS OF THE LEBANESE POPULATION AFTER NINE MONTHS OF CIVIL WAR.

2. FATHER RIEDMATTER SAID, "THE SUFFERING IS IMMENSE: THE LEBANESE PEOPLE, THE LEBANESE CHURCH, THE CHRISTIAN LEBANESE HAVE SUFFERED AND SUFFER. WE MUST HELP THEM...OUR LEBANESE BROTHERS HE RIGHT TO COUNT ON THE SOLIDARITY OF THEIR BROTHERS AROUND THE WORL." HE ADDED "CHARITY CANNOT BE RESERVED TO A PARTICULAR SECTOR. CHRISTIAN CHARITY MUST BE FOR ALL...ALL THESE PEOPLE WHO HAVE HAD TO ABANDON EHRI HOMES, WITHOUT WORK, WITHOUT SALARIES, DEPRIVED OF EVERY RESOURCE, HAVE ABSOLUTE NEED OF THE MEANS NECESSARY FOR LIVING, THAT IS FOOD AND CLOTHING. BESIDES, IN THE MOUNTAINS WHERE LARGE GROUPS OF THE POPULATION

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HAVE SETTLED THEMSELVES, THE TEMPORARY HOSPITALS MUST BE ABLE TO ASSURE CARE AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF MADICINES.

LASTLY, IT'S NECESSARY THAT THE PEOPLE RETURN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO THEIR HOMES. BUT TO DO THIS THE HOUSES MUST BE MADE HABITABLE."

3. FATHER RIEDMATTEN CONCLUDED HIS APPEAL ON VATICAN RADIO WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT: "I TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE OCCASION OFFERED ME TO SPEAK ON RADIO VATICAN TO ASK THE CHILDREN OF THE CHURCH, NOTWITHSTANDING THE MANY APPEALS THAT PRESENTLY COME FROM MANY PARTS OF THE WORLD (I THINK PARTICULARLY OF GUATEMALA), NOT TO DISINTEREST THEMSELVES IN LEBANON, WHICH MUST BE HELPED, IF FOR NO OTHER REASON THAN BECAUSE IT SUFFERS, BECAUSE IT HAS ALWAYS DONE HONOR TO THE CHURCH AND IT COUNTS ON THE CHURCH."

4. MINIMIZE CONSIDERED.VOLPE

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